**Assessing the Accuracy of Individual Elements of a Witness’s Statement**

**Principle:** Point-by-point consideration of a statement may enable judgment on which components of the statement are most accurate. Each piece of information recalled by the witness may be remembered independently of other elements.

**Policy:** The investigator should review the individual elements of the witness’s statement to determine the accuracy of each point.

**Procedure:** After conducting the interview, the investigator should?

* Consider each individual component of the witness’s statement separately.
* A witness may not have information about all elements of an incident. Thus, some recollections may be correct while others may be incorrect.

**NOTE:**

These procedures are conducted after the interview, without the witness.

* Review each element of the witness’s statement in the context of the entire statement. Look for inconsistencies within the statement.
* Note any inconsistencies for future reference. Also, note that the inconsistency of one element with another does not imply that the entire statement is inaccurate.

**Step 2** examines the internal consistency of the statement.

* Review each element of the statement in the context of evidence known to the investigator from other sources (e.g., other witnesses? statements, physical evidence).
* Note any inconsistencies between the witness’s statement and other information. These inconsistencies can be useful in assessing the accuracy of elements of witness statements as well as in directing the investigation.

**Step 3** examines the external consistency of the statement as it relates to other information obtained in the case investigation.

**Summary:** Point-by-point consideration of the accuracy of each element of a witness’s statement can assist in focusing the investigation. This technique avoids the common misconception that the accuracy of an individual element of a witness’s description predicts the accuracy of another element.